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## **A Multi-level Governance Analysis of Urban Foreign Policy: The Role of the EU in City-to-City Cooperation**

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**Abstract:** The international activities of cities are mushrooming all over Europe. Traditional city partnerships are more frequently giving way to policy-oriented cooperation schemes in city networks. A few of these city networks clearly have the goal to lobby upper-level governments. This is most pronounced in the Eurocities network, the lobby organization for large city-regions at the European Union (EU) level. However, the multi-level governance aspects of policy-oriented horizontal city networking are less clear. My paper analyzes international activities of cities in a multi-level governance scheme, with a special focus on the question of how the relationship between cities and the EU is structured by city networking. The paper argues that the relationship between cities and the EU in this respect is twofold: First, cities use city networks to lobby jointly at the EU for their own benefit (i.e., uploading). The goal hereby is to gain knowledge on upcoming EU regulations concerning urban issues and to prevent the EU from establishing rules that are not in the interest of cities. Second, cities also obtain financial help for their inter-urban cooperation schemes from (i.e., downloading). The EU is increasingly financing city networking to allow the dissemination of best practices in several policy fields and to thereby strengthen the overall competitiveness of the European Economic Area. The paper concludes that the underlying motive of the EU is to strengthen the economically important city-regions against the national-states. The cooperation between the supranational EU and the sub-national cities thereby brings together the two scales responsible for economic competitiveness in the age of globalization. The role of the EU in urban foreign policy is much bigger than a priori expected. I therefore plead for the incorporation of vertical aspects in the analysis of horizontal urban cooperation schemes.

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# **A Multi-level Governance Analysis of Urban Foreign Policy**

## **The Role of the EU in City-to-City Cooperation**

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### **Abstract**

The international activities of cities are mushrooming all over Europe. Traditional city partnerships are more frequently giving way to policy-oriented cooperation schemes in city networks. A few of these city networks clearly have the goal to lobby upper-level governments. This is most pronounced in the Eurocities network, the lobby organization for large city-regions at the European Union (EU) level. However, the multi-level governance aspects of policy-oriented horizontal city networking are less clear. My paper analyzes international activities of cities in a multi-level governance scheme, with a special focus on the question of how the relationship between cities and the EU is structured by city networking.

The paper argues that the relationship between cities and the EU in this respect is twofold: First, cities use city networks to lobby jointly at the EU for their own benefit (i.e., uploading). The goal hereby is to gain knowledge on upcoming EU regulations concerning urban issues and to prevent the EU from establishing rules that are not in the interest of cities. Second, cities also obtain financial help for their inter-urban cooperation schemes from the EU (i.e., downloading). The EU is increasingly financing city networking to allow the dissemination of best practices in several policy fields and to thereby strengthen the overall competitiveness of the European Economic Area.

The paper concludes that the underlying motive of the EU is to strengthen the economically important city-regions against the nation-states. The cooperation between the supranational EU and the sub-national cities thereby brings together the two scales responsible for economic competitiveness in the age of globalization. The role of the EU in urban foreign policy is much bigger than a priori expected. I therefore plead for the incorporation of vertical aspects in the analysis of horizontal urban cooperation schemes.

## 1. Introduction

The phenomenon of cities developing their own international activities<sup>1</sup> is nothing new; some of their city partnerships date back to the Middle Ages. However, since the 1980s we have witnessed an astonishing boost in these international contacts between cities: The idea of city networks began to spread all over Europe (and over the rest of the world). We can see the increasing international connectivity of cities as part of their new self-confidence in the age of globalisation. Whereas the national state lost its predominant position due to growing deregulation pressures in international competitiveness, cities strengthened their political steering capacities as nodal points of capital accumulation.

This reshuffling of state spatial hierarchies (Brenner 2004; Collinge 1999) consists of two aspects: A shift of political steering capacity upwards to the supranational level and a shift downwards to city-regions. The upscaling of political steering capacity to international organisations as the WTO or the EU thus goes hand in hand with a downscaling of political steering capacities to urban areas. However, it remains unclear how these two processes are coupled. My paper investigates the multi-level governance aspects between city-regions and the EU by looking at the mushrooming international activities of the latter. Almost all cities in Europe have used these newly gained steering capacities to develop some form of urban foreign policy by formulating a coherent strategy with whom they want to network and in what policy domains. As international contacts have been first and foremost in the hands of the national state, we expect these activities at the city's scale to increase in a globalised world (Swyngedouw 1997). Cities gain independence from the national state in developing their own international contacts and they thereby bypass the national state and jump scales (Smith 1995).

Whereas city-to-city cooperation is primarily a form of horizontal cooperation, I am particularly interested in the elements of vertical governance within these horizontal cooperation schemes here, i.e. the role of upper-level governments in city networks and the relation between cities and their upper-level governments concerning their international contacts. The rivalries between the EU, the national state, and city-regions on the predominance in foreign policy are part of the new multi-level governance setting in Europe (Hooghe und Marks 2001). The analysis of urban foreign policy is therefore an important aspect to study this multi-level governance setting

In the reminder of this paper, I first present a theoretical guideline on the EU-local relations to distinguish between the uploading and the downloading function that these relations can have. I will then use insights from the international activities of seven city-regions to test, which of these functions is predominant in the EU-city relation. The comparison of five Swiss city-regions with two counterparts from within the EU (Lyon and Stuttgart) allows for analysing the influence of the EU. I will conclude that the influence of the EU in interurban networking is indeed much stronger than a priori expected. However, the goal that the EU follows with their support of interurban networking, its increased economic competitiveness, is not easily achievable. Interurban cooperation and the respective support from the EU are most effective in non-competitive domains. My analysis is based on more than 80 expert interviews with key decision makers from the seven city-regions and an extensive document analysis (see van der Heiden 2010).

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<sup>1</sup> I define international activities of one community as an engagement of a city in transnational cooperation schemes that involves at least one partner city in another country.

## ***2. Urban foreign policy and multi level governance***

Looking at the international contacts of cities, we have to distinguish between the longstanding tradition of city partnerships and the more recent phenomenon of city networks. Whereas some city partnerships have their origins in the middle ages, we witness an astonishing boost of city networking from the 1980s onwards<sup>2</sup>. These city networks can take two forms: Either they are lobby networks that speak up for the urban sake at higher level governments (with Eurocities being the most prominent example lobbying at the EU scale, see Heinelt und Niederhafner 2008) or they are policy-oriented cooperation schemes, where cities cooperate e.g. in environmental politics in the Climate Alliance network; or in public transport in the POLIS network. The networks themselves state that policy learning, i.e. the share of best practices between their members, is the key goal of their activities. Cities are free to join (and leave) these networks, they pay an annual fee and opt to participate in conferences, workshops and other activities that are organised by the network. However, the boundaries between lobby and policy-oriented networks have become blurred as most lobby networks have started to incorporate policy-specific aspects of city-to-city cooperation within their structure. And, as I will subsequently show, policy-oriented networks have started to lobby at upper-level governments in their specific domain as well.

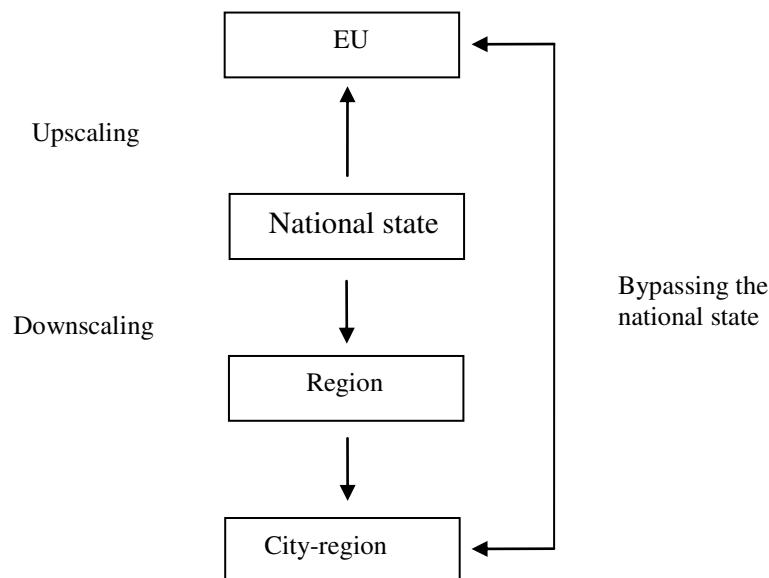
My goal is to put both aspects of urban foreign policy (city partnerships and city networking) in the broader context of a multi-level governance scheme. As several authors have thoroughly shown, Europe is nowadays a governance system with dispersed political steering capacities on several scales (Bache 2004; Hooghe und Marks 2001). This includes the above mentioned aspects of up- and downscaling with increased steering capacities on the supranational (EU) and on the subnational (the city-region's) scale. The national scale however, has lost much of its regulatory power, although it remains a hotly debated topic if we really witness a "hollowing out" (Jessop 2004) of the national state in the age of globalisation. The city-regions, by developing their own international activities, bypass the national state and directly address questions of the global order and or the EU (see Figure 1).

Certainly, governance has become scalarly complex and the room for manoeuvre for city-regions has increased. We can see the new self-confidence of city-regions developing their own international activities as part of this rescaling process (Brenner 2004). However, the relations between the several scales involved, and especially the one between the two new important scales (the EU and the local scale) remain unclear. The question hereby is how upper-level governments react to the new phenomenon of urban foreign policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Although Ewen and Hebbert (2007) show that city networking is everything else than a new phenomenon.

Figure 1: Bypassing the national state



There are two rival hypotheses concerning the upper-level government's reaction to urban foreign policy: On the one hand, upper-level governments could perceive city-regions' international activities as competing their predominance in this domain. Especially the national scale could see its long-ranging monopoly in foreign policy in danger. Therefore, "national governments have tended jealously to guard their control over this process [international activities] and have been prone to exclude other actors" (Rees 1997). Kincaid (1989, see also Aldecoa und Keating 1999; Keating 2001: 386; Kincaid 2002) observes that city-regions usually become active on the international scale when they strongly disagree with a policy on the national level; for example, an increasing number of city partnerships were established between the United States and Nicaragua during the US embargo against Nicaragua in the 1970s (Cremer et al. 2001: 382; Kincaid 1989: 241). There is thus a conflict between the foreign policy of city-regions and upper-level governments. We would consequently suspect city-regions to develop their own international activities in times of strong disagreement among the different political scales (Church und Reid 1996: 1313; Keating 1999: 5).

On the other hand, upper-level governments could boost city-regions as the new motors of economic prosperity. Their international connectivity is crucial for the economic well-being of larger areas (the national state or even the EU as a whole). National states and the EU should consequently view the international activities of city-regions as aspects of the new scalar importance of city-regions in global competition (Brenner und Theodore 2002; McGuirk 2004: 1020). Therefore, upper level governments should not prevent city-regions from pursuing their own international activities. If international activities are perceived as a necessary political response to economic processes (and as part of a locational policy strategy for fostering economic growth at the city-region level), then city-regions should be able to count on the support of upper-level governments for their international activities (Church und Reid 1996: 1315).

It is thus a priori unclear whether upper-level governments support city-regions' international activities or not. It is unclear whether city-regions develop their international activities to bypass the national state and to gain regulatory independence from upper-level governments or if city-regions' international activities are a mutual scalar strategy of several involved scales. This double logic of interscalar support or competition (Savitch und Kantor 2002) can be applied not only to the regional and national, but also to the supranational scale (i.e., the EU).

Concerning the relation between the supranational EU and the subnational city-regions, scholars point to two interrelated mechanisms in interurban networking (Kern und Bulkeley 2009; Marshall 2005). First, city-regions increasingly profit from EU funding. Whereas the financial redistribution process in earlier stages of the European integration process was primarily between the EU and the national states, it is now a multi-level redistribution scheme that allows the EU to support initiatives on the regional and even on the local scale directly (Kübler und Piliutyte 2007). This is what Marshall (2005) calls "downloading Europeanisation", Kern and Bulkeley (2009) describe this as "top-down vertical Europeanisation".

Second, city-regions are more and more directly affected by decisions taken by the EU. As the "traditional" multi-level governance setting makes it very hard for city-regions to lobby at the EU (through their respective regional and national governments), they seek to get hold of information on upcoming EU legislation more directly and to lobby at the EU scale for their purposes. This is what Marshall calls "uploading Europeanisation". Kern and Bulkeley (2009) mention, that the EU's decision making in the area of environment and sustainable development has become much more important than the domestic policy making in this respect. That is why cities, cooperating in environmental networks, now primarily seek to influence the EU's legislation in this respect. They describe this as "bottom-up Europeanisation". With the ongoing process of European integration, we can suspect that municipal politics are more and more affected by EU decision making. The incentive to influence this decision-making process has accordingly become stronger.

### ***3. Empirical insights from Swiss and EU cities***

To see whether the EU really makes a difference in urban foreign policy and how, I will present insights from two EU city-regions (Lyon and Stuttgart), and five city-regions from outside the EU, namely from Switzerland. After a brief overview of the international activities of the respective city-region, I look specifically at aspects of up- and downloading Europeanisation.

#### ***Lyon: going global for the top 15***

The official goal of Lyon's policy makers is to become one of the 15 economically strongest European city-regions (Grand Lyon 2005: 5). Lyon, currently in 23<sup>rd</sup> position in the ranking they refer to (Cushman&Wakefield/Healey&Baker 1990-2009), thus tries to improve its relative position in the European urban hierarchy. The international activities of the city-

region of Lyon<sup>3</sup> are part of this economic strategy. The city-region of Lyon has currently<sup>4</sup> seven partner cities and is engaged in 15 city networks (see Table 1).

**Table 1: The international activities of Lyon**

International activity	Description	Categorisation
Birmingham (Great Britain)		City partnership
Beer-Sheva (Israel)		City partnership
Canton (China)		City partnership
Frankfurt (Germany)		City partnership
Milan (Italy)		City partnership
Saint-Louis (USA)		City partnership
Yokohama (Japan)		City partnership
Les Rencontres	Cities cooperating on cultural policy	Thematic network
Banlieues d'Europe	Cities cooperating on cultural policy	Thematic network
GCD/GDS	Cities for digital solidarity	Thematic network
IAEC	Cities cooperating on education policy	Thematic network
DÉLICE	Cities with a relation to haute cuisine	Thematic network
LUCI	Cities cooperating on lighting policy	Thematic network
IRE	Cities cooperating in location promotion	Thematic network
EURADA	Cities cooperating in location promotion	Thematic network
UCP	Cities fighting poverty	Thematic network
EMTA	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
OWHC	Cities with a world heritage	Thematic network
AIMF	Multi-thematic network	Lobby network
Citynet/Proact	Asian-pacific cities (multi-thematic)	Lobby network
Eurocities	Multi-thematic network	Lobby network
UCLG	Multi-thematic network	Lobby network

Especially worth mentioning is Lyon's engagement in the Eurocities network. Lyon was among the six founding members of the Eurocities network in 1996. The Eurocities network was established to give secondary cities a voice in Europe. As politicians at the time perceived Lyon to be a secondary city, their commitment to the network was strong. For almost 10 years (1986-1997), Lyon held a seat in the executive committee, before taking a more passive role when the goal of the network was broadened to include lobbying at the EU. After the election of a new mayor (Gérard Collomb) in 2001, Lyon again increased its engagement in the network. Collomb served as a member of Eurocities' executive board from 2002 to 2005, as its vice-president in 2005 and 2006, and as its president in 2007 and 2008. Lyon also hosted the annual conference of Eurocities in 2005.

Lyon also created two city networks. The first one, Délice, desires to bring together cities with a tradition of haute cuisine. The second one, LUCI (Lighting Urban Community International), reunifies cities to share best practices in urban lighting. The network is closely linked to Lyon's annual lighting festival. Lyon managed to obtain 667'000 Euros from the EU for setting up the network (Grand Lyon 2006: 70).

Lyon is a member of two international networks in the domain of locational politics. The IRE (Innovative Regions Europe) network is closely related to the EU's goal of increasing the

<sup>3</sup> The city of Lyon and the "communauté urbaine de Lyon" have merged their services for the international contacts in 2006.

<sup>4</sup> My investigation includes all international activities until the end of 2007.

competitiveness of regions, whereas the EURADA (European Association of Development Agencies) network is independent from the EU. Both networks aim at sharing best practices in locational politics. Policy makers from Lyon are unsatisfied with the cooperation within both networks, as they perceive an unwillingness of other cities to share best practices in the domain of locational politics. There have been serious discussions in Lyon to retrieve from one of the two networks as the membership in both networks with more or less the same goal is seen as unnecessary. The fact that the IRE network has been established by the European commission made the membership in this network more attractive to Lyon's policy makers.

Lyon was also for a long time the only European member city of Citynet<sup>5</sup>, a network of Asian-Pacific city-regions. The EU financed a project (Proact) that brought together member cities from Citynet and from Eurocities to discuss further European-Asian city-to-city collaboration possibilities. (Grand Lyon 2006: 39; Proact Asia Urbs 2005: 2).

Lyon uses both the downloading as well as the uploading function in its relation with the EU. Concerning the downloading aspect, Lyon profited from a co-financing of its networking activities in the Citynet as well as in the Délice network. However, as an economically already very strong region, it did not receive substantial subsidies from the EU apart from project based funding. Concerning the uploading function, Lyon uses its central role within the Eurocities network to be ahead of new EU legislation that concerns the local scale. The engagement of Lyon's mayor within Eurocities makes him the key addressee for the EU concerning issues of local governance. In his function as (vice-) president of Eurocities, he was at the heart of EU's decision making. Policy makers see this extremely good position within the Eurocities network as a political and economic asset. The Eurocities presidency of Collomb made him a door-opener for the city-region of Lyon at the EU.

The scalar orientation of the international activities of Lyon goes beyond Europe. Many, but not necessarily the majority, of its international activities, have a link with the EU. Lyon stresses the uploading rather than the downloading function of its relations with the EU, mainly through the strong engagement within the Eurocities network. Its primary goal is to remain at the forefront of new EU legislation that could affect Lyon and to influence those decisions.

### ***Stuttgart: global mobility***

In Stuttgart, both the city and the metropolitan governance body (Region Stuttgart) have their own international activities. The two scales conflict over the precursory role in this domain and they hardly cooperate on these matters. The city of Stuttgart has nine city partnerships and is engaged in eight international networks (see Table 2).

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<sup>5</sup> It has been joined by Ancona from Italy.



**Table 2: The international activities of the city of Stuttgart**

International activity	Description	Categorisation
Cairo (Egypt)		City partnership
Cardiff (Great Britain)		City partnership
Lodz (Poland)		City partnership
Menzel Bourguiba (Tunisia)		City partnership
Mumbai (India)		City partnership
Samara (Russia)		City partnership
St. Helens (Great Britain)		City partnership
St. Louis (USA)		City partnership
Strasbourg (France)		City partnership
Climate Alliance	Cities for a liberal environmental policy	Thematic network
Energie-Cités	Cities for a liberal environmental policy	Thematic network
CLIP	Cities cooperating in integration policy	Thematic network
Cities for Children	Cities cooperating in youth policy	Thematic network
POLIS	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
CIVITAS	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
URB-AL Nr. 8	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
Cities for Mobility	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
UCLG	Multi-thematic network	Lobby network

The city of Stuttgart has profited from a co-financing of its city partnership activities by the EU on several occasions. Both the traditional partnerships with Western European cities as well as their partnerships dedicated more to development aid have profited from EU subsidies. Policy makers in Stuttgart describe the process of obtaining subsidies from the EU for partnership activities as rather complex, but worthwhile.

As the city of Lyon, Stuttgart also established two new city networks (both in 2006). The first one, CLIP (Cities for Local Integration Policy of Migrants), is a network of cities sharing best practices in integration policy. The city of Stuttgart sought international cooperation in this domain because policy makers felt unsatisfied about the cooperation with other German cities in this respect. Stuttgart, quite contrary to other German cities, is in need of qualified immigrants. The second one, Cities for Children, originated from the same idea. The network wants to share best practices in youth policy, because policy makers in Stuttgart see a necessity to provide a family-friendly environment for immigrants. Surprisingly, Stuttgart is not a member of Eurocities although this has been debated several times. The constant dispute on the cost-benefit analysis of a potential membership in this network has prevented Stuttgart until now to join this primary lobby organisation for cities at the EU.

The bulk of international cooperation by the city of Stuttgart is in the domain of transport. Stuttgart is a member of the POLIS and CIVITAS networks, which are both linked to the EU's engagement in this policy domain. Stuttgart was also a leader in the EU-initiated URB-AL network. The goal of this network was to establish cooperation schemes between European and South American cities. Stuttgart coordinated the program nr. 8, which deals with issues of mobility (Landeshauptstadt Stuttgart 2003: 9). The EU-financed program ended in 2002, but Stuttgart created and financed a follow-up network (Cities for Mobility).

The metropolitan government of the Stuttgart area is a member of eight international networks as well (see Table 3).

**Table 3: The international activities of the Stuttgart region**

International Activity	Description	Categorisation
IRE	Cities <sup>6</sup> cooperating in location promotion	Thematic network
EURADA	Cities cooperating in location promotion	Thematic network
METREX	City-regions cooperating in spatial planning	Thematic network
CIVITAS	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
EMTA	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
POLIS	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
URB-AL Nr. 8	Cities cooperating in transport policy	Thematic network
EU-Delegate	Multi-thematic lobbying activity	Lobbying

The Stuttgart region is (or was) a member of both networks in the domain of locational politics where Lyon participates as well (the IRE and the Eurada network). In the Stuttgart region, policy makers were unsatisfied with the willingness to cooperate of other city-regions. They witnessed the duplication of the two networks. Contrary to Lyon, the policy makers in Stuttgart therefore left the Eurada network and remained active only in the IRE network. The reason for the decision to remain in the IRE network was its closer relation to EU institutions.

The Stuttgart region has its own delegate to the EU in Brussels since 2001. Policy makers noted the EU's increasing influence not only on regions and cities, but also on metropolitan areas. They therefore decided that gaining access to information from the EU and its funding options is crucial for the Stuttgart region. Having a lobbyist in Brussels is seen as part of the region's general strategy of increased economic competitiveness (Schreiber 2007: 7; Verband Region Stuttgart 2001).

We thus witness an even more complex multi-level governance setting in Stuttgart's relations to the EU. Both local scales, the city as well as the metropolitan government, are engaged in international city networks and both scales partially use these networks to increase their linkages with the EU. The city and the metropolitan government however rather compete than cooperate in this matter. This is contrary to the case of Lyon, where the two services have merged and the cooperation between the city and the city-region is cooperative concerning their international activities.

Concerning the downloading function, we can see that the EU finances several of the international contacts of Stuttgart. The traditional city partnerships as well as the newly established networks were partially subsidised by the EU. Policy makers in the Stuttgart area are proud of the fact that they obtain money from the EU although Stuttgart is an economically very prosperous area and thus in a difficult position to obtain money from the EU. The URB-AL project, where the city of Stuttgart had the lead of the project on mobility, was even solely financed by the EU. This helped to establish the follow-up network Cities for Mobility that now runs without subsidies from the EU. The other networks on mobility issues where both the city as well as the region are members (POLIS and CIVITAS) are partially financed by the EU as well. The policy makers in Stuttgart strategically assess all possibilities for obtaining a co-financing by the EU in all their international contacts.

Stuttgart also strategically uses the uploading function to the EU. The city closely monitors the EU decisions that are relevant for Stuttgart. They have designated one person within every

<sup>6</sup> Although the region cooperates in the international network, I use the term *city* because cities are the most common actors within international networks. The membership of a regional metropolitan governance structure is certainly an exception within most networks.

department that is responsible for the contacts to the EU. These persons regularly meet to discuss new EU legislation and its impacts. The Stuttgart region even decided to set up its own office at the EU's headquarter in Brussels to lobby for its sake. The city of Stuttgart takes a more indirect approach through its city networks to do so. As several of these networks lobby for the interests of their member cities at the EU, Stuttgart profits from its membership in these networks by being up to date on EU legislation in the respective policy domains. Three of the networks in the domain of transport (CIVITAS, POLIS, and EMTA) are good examples for close relations of city networks and the EU. They, as well as many other networks, have managed to get subsidies for their work from the EU.

Stuttgart thus clearly targets the EU with most of its international activities. It uses both the uploading as well as the downloading function extensively. It seeks co-financing of several of its international activities (downloading) and has opted to have its own contact person in Brussels (uploading).

### *The Swiss city-regions: No EU, no networking?*

Looking at the international activities of Swiss city-regions reveals a totally different picture. Whereas Lyon and Stuttgart have a professional management of their international activities and a coherent strategy of using both the up- and the downloading function in their relations with the EU, such aspects are lacking in most Swiss city-regions.

Already the comparison of the number of international activities shows the gap between Swiss and EU city-regions. Whereas we identified about 20 international activities each for Lyon and Stuttgart, the Swiss city with the most international activities, Geneva, has twelve of them (see Table 4). Three of the five Swiss cities under scrutiny do not have a partner city and only two of them, Geneva and Zurich, have recently joined Eurocities.

**Table 4: The international activities of Swiss cities**

<b>City-region</b>	<b>Berne</b>	<b>Geneva</b>	<b>Lausanne</b>	<b>Lucerne</b>	<b>Zurich</b>
<b>Int. act.</b>					
Thematic networks	4	9	5	2	6
Lobby networks	-	3	2	-	2
City partnerships	-	-	-	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

There is thus a general reluctance of Swiss city-regions to engage in international activities. This is a first indicator that the EU indeed seems to matter in this respect, and qualitative insights from the five city-regions confirm this notion. Several interviewed policy makers witness an increasing influence of EU regulations in their domain. Swiss cities often have to deal with the new regulations from the EU although they did not participate in the decision making process towards these new regulations. They also witness that several networks have changed their focus. Whereas they used to be policy networks to share best practices in one domain, they increasingly try to use both the up- as well as the downloading function towards the EU. Networks try to obtain money from the EU for their activities (downloading).

Swiss cities are often excluded from these subsidies, so they cannot participate in the respective networking activities. Some of them have successfully managed to obtain a co-financing by the Swiss national state, which has some financial mechanisms to replace the share of the EU in EU-programmes. However, this is a complex procedure for the Swiss

cities: First, they have to manage to get accepted by the EU programme. Second, they have to demand subsidies from the Swiss national state. This adds up to a duplication of administrative work for the involved policy makers and several of them hesitated to participate in EU-financed programmes because of these administrative hurdles. Whereas a few policy makers have opted to pay the share of the EU for their city in a specific networking activity on their own and a few others have managed to get funding by the Swiss national state, most of them decide to not participate in such activities.

The networks have also set the goal to be aware of new upcoming regulations from the EU and to influence them (uploading function). Swiss city regions are less interested in this and they therefore participate less in these networking activities. Swiss city-regions thus have a lower incentive to participate in interurban networking aiming at the uploading function towards the EU. Some examples from the case studies show that both the down- and the uploading function towards the EU, prominent features of city networks, are less interesting for Swiss city-regions.

The city of Berne is a member of the OWHC (Organisation of World Heritage Cities) network in the domain of cultural preservation. The involved policy makers note the increasing influence of EU regulations in this domain and the increasing financial support from the EU for large cultural preservation projects. The city of Berne cannot profit from this funding. Policy makers also regret not being able to participate in the respective decision-making procedures. At the end, they still have to comply with the respective EU regulations, without having a chance to influence them.

The policy makers involved in Geneva's and Lausanne's cooperation with the Les Rencontres network in the domain of culture witness the same problem. The network is increasingly trying to get its activities financed by the EU, but Geneva cannot participate in these projects. The policy makers additionally mentioned the problem that Swiss cities can no longer become European capital of culture, as this label is limited to EU member state cities from 2011 on. Geneva therefore attached itself to Lyon's candidacy to become European capital of culture in 2013<sup>7</sup>. Within the LUCI network (see above), the EU finances the travel expenses and preparation activities through its Interreg III programme. Geneva could not profit from this funding but has to finance its activities within the LUCI network independently. The same is true for Zurich's engagement within the two environmental networks Climate Alliance and ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives) and its networking activities within METREX (see above). Here as well, policy makers notice the increasing (financial) influence of the EU in the networking activities and the resulting problems for Swiss city-regions.

As long as Switzerland is not part of the EU, I mean, if the will of Switzerland is not there to participate in the EU, it is then very difficult for Swiss cities [...] to participate in these EU-wide projects. We witnessed that we would have to pay it on our own (head of the department for environment).

The city of Lucerne with its many partner cities increasingly has the problem that their counterparts' expenses are partially paid by the EU. This would potentially allow increasing the partnership activities but Lucerne is confronted with financial difficulties as it cannot profit from the EU's financing of partnership activities. For certain subsidies, the EU has limited funding to partnerships between cities within the EU. This has led several partner cities of Swiss cities to shift their attention towards other partnerships. Partnership activities

<sup>7</sup> Lyon did not succeed to become the European capital of culture.

with Swiss cities have become more expensive for them compared to the partnership activities with other cities from the EU.

The two biggest Swiss cities have recently joined the Eurocities network<sup>8</sup>. Although they have both not yet become very active within the network, their motives to join the network are worth mentioning. Both cities state – more or less explicitly – state that they wanted to take a stand against the Swiss national isolationism. The urban-rural divide within Switzerland is clear-cut: The urban population is much more in favour of opening up the country and joining the EU than their rural counterparts. Joining Eurocities is one of the few possibilities the city governments of Geneva and Zurich saw to make a statement in this respect. One policy makers explicitly mentioned this fact:

Geneva contributes to the Eurocities network although Switzerland is not a member of the EU, because it is an important place for exchange on the European level. Even if we are not part of the European community, we are still in Europe [...]. It is thus an indirect message that is given to the rest of Switzerland (head of the service for external relations).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The difference in the international activities between EU and non-EU city-regions is overwhelming. City-networking, which is a priori a horizontal cooperation scheme, obviously incorporates many aspects of vertical governance. The analysis of Lyon's and Stuttgart's international activities revealed that both city-regions extensively use both the uploading, as well as the downloading function towards the EU within their networking activities. However, they each stress different aspects in their relations with the EU. Lyon primarily opts for the uploading function, whereas Stuttgart puts considerable effort in the downloading aspects as well. None of the functions is dominant for all city-regions. Rather, policy makers in each city-region can strategically decide which option is more promising for their city-region.

Two theoretical implications follow from this: First, the EU-local relations cannot be conceptualised as solely vertical. Many, and even the big city-regions, do not have the possibilities to have a staff large enough to be aware of all upcoming new EU legislation and to be aware of all funding possibilities for cities at the EU. They therefore often put their resources together in city networks. These networks provide the necessary information to their member cities on how to structure their relation to the EU, either policy-specific, or as lobby organisations (mostly through Eurocities). Second, the international activities of city-regions cannot be conceptualised as solely horizontal either. Many city partnerships and especially networks have shifted their attention towards the EU. Sharing best practices is still an important goal of interurban networking. However, the management of EU knowledge (uploading) and of funding possibilities from the EU (downloading) have become important additional benefits for member cities in interurban networks. Thereby, the EU increasingly sets the agenda within these networks. Horizontal aspects have thus become crucial in horizontal cooperation forms of city-regions.

Switzerland is an outsider in this process. Swiss city-regions are mostly disconnected from a process of increasing interlinkages between EU city-regions. They can neither profit fully

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<sup>8</sup> In the case of Geneva, it is actually a "re-joining" because Geneva was already a member of the Eurocities network in the 1990s. A right-wing government then abandoned the membership.

from the uploading, nor from the downloading function of city networks. Both functions are at least partially barred for Swiss city-regions. Although the membership in Eurocities is open to city-regions from outside the EU territory, its primary goal to lobby at the EU has much less significance for those cities. Consequently, only two Swiss cities have opted for such a membership and they are both, up to now, rather passive in this network. They do not fully profit from the downloading options this (and other) network(s) offer, although policy makers from all Swiss city-regions acknowledged that urban policy making is nowadays influenced by the EU even in cities outside the EU.

Several examples have shown that the downloading function is even harder to achieve for Swiss city-regions. Interurban cooperation is often subsidised by the EU, but funding is often limited to EU city-regions. Although there is a rather complex procedure that the Swiss national state can substitute the EU financing, it makes interurban cooperation much more difficult for city-regions not located in EU member countries.

We can thus conclude that the EU is one of the driving forces of this movement of increased networking activities on the city scale (see also Church und Reid 1996: 1297f.; Phelps et al. 2002: 211; Ward und Williams 1997). With their financial incentives, they foster these cooperation mechanisms. The difficulty in accessing information from the EU additionally pushes city-regions to cooperate, as they are alone unable to provide the necessary resources for accessing the EU in all important policy domains. Sharing these resources in policy-specific networks allows them to fully profit from the uploading possibilities towards the EU. City-regions outside the EU territory are excluded from this development.

The question remains why the EU is so strongly engaged in interurban networking. The logic of glocalisation (Swyngedouw 1997) explains the cooperation between the supra- and the subnational scale. According to the logic of up- and downscaling (see again the introduction), the two scales cooperate that have political steering capacity in the age of globalisation. The underlying goal is often the shared 'enemy', i.e. the nation state. Leitner et al. (2002: 288) state that "the inter-urban networks of the EU were created by EU institutions in part to strengthen their power and authority vis-à-vis nation-states". This argument is convincing. Both scales are in a power-struggle (a "politics of scale", see Gonzalez 2006) with the national scale. Both scales "see advantage in trying to outmanoeuvre nation-states over policy directions and the use of resources" (Harding 1997: 302). The vertical aspects of horizontal city networking thus follow the logic of 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend'.

The EU, with its support of city networking, follows an economic logic. By supporting the economic powerhouses to share best practices, the EU's goal is to increase the competitiveness of the whole European area (Lisbon goals, see Jakoby und Schmolinsky 2005). However, it remains unclear whether this can really be achieved. The analysis of interurban networking has shown that the city-regions are only willing to share best practices through networking in non-competitive domains (as e.g. environment or public transport<sup>9</sup>). Here, the dissemination of best practices is unproblematic. Horizontal cooperation in highly competitive domains, as e.g. locational politics, is however almost impossible, even with the EU's support of such cooperation mechanisms. City-regions are unwilling to share best practices in this domain as they would lose their competitive advantage against other city-regions by doing so. The competitiveness of the European economic area as a whole might thus not be strengthened by the EU's support of interurban networking. There is thus a multi-

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<sup>9</sup> Obviously, it is debatable whether these policy domains are really non-competitive issues.

level governance setting between the EU and the local scale concerning the latter's international activities. However, it is a setting against the national state and it is a cooperation scheme that develops its full potential only in non-competitive issues.

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